

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF LICENSING SERVICES
OFFICE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES LICENSING
SUBSTANTIVE POLICY STATEMENT - SP-027-DLS-OMF**

IMPLEMENTATION OF A HOSPITAL ACUITY PLAN

This substantive policy is advisory only. A substantive policy statement does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal procedures of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules made in accordance with the Arizona administrative procedure act. If you believe that this substantive policy statement does impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties you may petition the agency under Arizona Revised Statutes § 41-1033 for a review of the statement.

The purpose of this substantive policy statement is to notify the public of the Department's interpretation of A.A.C. R9-10-208(C)(2) and (3) to ensure that a patient receives appropriate nursing services during unexpected circumstances beyond the control of the nurse executive or the hospital.

According to R9-10-201(3):

"Acuity" means a patient's need for hospital services based on the patient's medical condition.

According to R9-10-201(4):

"Acuity plan" means a method for establishing nursing personnel requirements based on a patient's acuity.

According to R9-10-208(C):

A nurse executive shall require that:

2. An acuity plan is established, documented, and implemented that includes:
 - a. A method that establishes the types and numbers of nursing personnel that are required for each unit in the hospital;
 - b. An assessment of a patient's need for nursing services made by a registered nurse providing nursing services directly to the patient; and
 - c. A policy and procedure stating the steps a hospital will take to obtain the nursing personnel necessary to meet patient acuity;
3. Registered nurses, including registered nurses providing nursing services directly to a patient, are knowledgeable about the acuity plan and implement the acuity plan established under subsection (C)(2).

The Department recognizes that the acuity plan established and documented under subsection (C)(2) may be impossible to implement due to circumstances beyond the control of the nurse executive or the hospital. For example, acuity may increase unexpectedly during a shift, requiring an increase in staffing. The hospital is required to implement the policy and procedure in (C)(2)(c) according to the situation creating the increased staffing requirement. Hospital policies and procedures are required that address how patients' needs for nursing services will be met in these circumstances and the hospital is required to document the implementation of these policies and procedures.

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